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REV. ROBERT D. BANNISTER

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—BY—

REV. ROBERT D. BANNISTER



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## INDIA AS A MISSION FIELD.

By REV. R. D. BANNISTER.

**I**NDIA'S proverbial riches have been sought after by the nations ever since the time when Ahaseurus "reigned from India even unto Ethiopia, over a hundred and seven and twenty provinces;" but India of today is a picture of the utter inability of mere human philosophy to raise man or to make a nation prosperous. The condition of its people is also a terrible object lesson, showing what hundreds of years of idolatry, ignorance, superstition, shameless and nameless sins can bring a nation to. With its former riches and greatness, its beauty and wonderful natural resources, India might have been in the fore-front of nations; but instead it is away in the background and seems specially under the curse of God. After Adam

fell, God's curse upon the ground for his sake was "thorns also and thistles shalt thou bring forth." This is especially true of India, where nearly every tree and shrub has its thorns, some of them one and a half inches long.

India is still one of the most backward countries of the East, because everything new that is brought in, is brought in by others. No progress is made by the people themselves. Were it not for the British government we believe India would have no railway, postoffice or telegraph systems today. In some things the people refuse to advance. The fields are yet cultivated in about the same way that they were centuries ago. Some years since, the British government sent out some modern steel plows and started a model farm to show the people how to cultivate their land in order to obtain good crops. But it was all in vain, the plows lie there rusting away and the people go on using their wooden plows just as their forefathers did. They,



however, make good use of the railways and the good hard roads the government has built and the educated ones use well the postoffice and telegraph.

The people are naturally very intelligent, but with the exception of some of the higher castes, they are kept in a state of ignorance and superstition, very few of them knowing how to read or write. Had they the opportunities that our western people have, coupled with the knowledge and the love of Jesus, they would come out far ahead of us in many ways. Their beautiful temples and tombs, the famous Taj Mahal, the fine carvings in wood seen in all the old towns, are monuments of their skill in architecture, sculpture and carving. With only very crude tools, they are able to turn out in many lines of goods, far better workmanship with far neater and prettier designs, than our people can with all their modern tools and up-to-date machinery.

But mostly now their intellects are

subservient to their idolatries, their passions and their sins. They worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Instead of serving the Living God they worship dumb idols of wood, stone, metal, or baked clay, and also animals and men.

Thus their intelligence becomes dwarfed and debased and it is true of them what the Scripture saith, "They that make them are like unto them, so is every one that trusteth in them." Connected with their worship is much that is impure, immoral, and very obscene, so that their worship instead of lifting them up to a life of purity and holiness, and drawing them nearer to God, serves rather to stimulate lustful propensities and desires. Their prayers—if indeed prayers they can be called—are all for material rather than Spiritual blessings. The women pray for children; the men for good crops, success in business, temporal prosperity, and even help to sin. The



ancient thugs of India, a band of robbers and murderers, used to ask aid and protection of the goddess Kali, when they went out on their terrible raids of robbery and murder. There is little or no thought of spiritual blessing in their requests. Many of their offerings are to appease their gods and goddesses and to ward off calamity and disease. Devi, the small-pox god, is worshipped to ward off small-pox; and Mariammi, the goddess of cholera, is worshipped that cholera may be kept away. Animals are often offered in sacrifice, with the thought of substitution, showing that in India as elsewhere, man has intuitive conception of the need of sacrifice and the law that, "Without shedding of blood, there is no remission."

They evidently think that their gods can be cheated, just as they cheat each other, and even that they sometimes deserve punishment. The writer, once passing by a temple, and seeing the door closed and locked on the out-

side, asked the people the reason of it. They answered, "We asked our god for rain and he did not give us any, so we locked him up for a little while." In offering a goat to their gods, they kill the goat in front of the idol and then give the idol the head and skin, while they take away the goat and eat it. So in offering a cocoanut to the monkey-god, Maruti, the nut is broken on the head of the god and he gets the shell with a tiny piece of the nut left in it, while the offerer eats the nut. Of course these gods do not know whether they have goat or skin, nut or shell. Thus the people believe their gods are like unto themselves, that just as they deceive each other, so their gods can be deceived.

India is a land of many people, many languages, many religions and many gods. There is altogether in India a population of about three hundred million souls, of whom Hinduism claims about two hundred and eleven millions, while some fifty-eight millions

are followers of the false prophet, Mahomet. The Parses, followers of Zoroaster number about ninety thousands, most of whom live in and around Bombay. Large numbers of Buddhists live in South India and Ceylon, and in Bombay and Western India, some called Jains. Besides these larger religious bodies there are a number of smaller sects of Deists, such as the Arya, Samaj, Brahmo Samaj, and Parthana Samaj. These sects oppose idolatry and worship only the true God but deny Jesus Christ to be anything more than a mere man, and recognize no need of an atonement.

The Hindus alone worship thirty-three crores, or three hundred and thirty millions of gods, thus as in Athens of old there are more gods than people in India. Of these Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, may be considered chief. In the Hindu Scriptures Brahma is spoken of as having committed incest with his own daughter and for that reason had one of his five heads

cut off and is now considered unworthy of worship. There remains only one temple now in all India dedicated to his worship.

Opinion is divided among the Brahmins as to whether Vishnu or Shiva is the chief god. Those who consider Vishnu to be the chief god, and worship him, are called Vaishnavites, while those who give Shiva that honor are called Shivites. Shiva is worshipped under many emblems, some of which are very obscene. Such objects of worship can only suggest impure thoughts instead of purifying the minds of the worshippers. From some of the stories told of him in the Hindu religious books, he may well be called the incarnation of drunkenness and lust. These three gods are called the Hindu Triad, all of which are worshipped by the Smartha Bramins. Some of these will sometimes claim that the Hindu Triad is the same as the Christian Trinity, only under different names.

Next in importance among the Hindu gods come perhaps the various incarnations of the god Vishnu. The stories told of some of these incarnations are very vile, quite unfit for publication. None of these incarnations was ever even supposed to have conferred any lasting spiritual benefit upon the people. Ram was a warrior who fought a great battle. Mutch was a fish which brought up the Vedas from the bottom of the sea into which they had been cast by a demon. And others became recognized as gods incarnate for similar reasons. The Hindus are now looking for the coming of the tenth incarnation of Vishnu, whom they call Kalanki. He is supposed to be coming as a great deliverer and the one who ushers in the golden age, an age of righteousness and peace. When he comes they say their country will be no more controlled by foreigners but will be given back to the Hindus again. Just about a year ago pamphlets were sent throughout India telling

the people to be ready, that Kalanki was just at hand. How much this is like the Christian doctrine of the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus, and how gladly Christians, who believe in the pre-millennial coming of the Lord, should be to take out the blessed news of salvation to them! We can tell them there is a Great Deliverer coming soon, who will usher in a golden age of righteousness and peace but that His name is Jesus Christ, not Kalanki.

The more ignorant classes of Hindus know little of their great gods and incarnations, or of their own religious books. They worship stone, brass and other metal images, some of which are images of the gods above mentioned, and others are images of snakes and animals, while some have no distinguishing shape whatever. A large stone or piece of rock is put up under a tree, or sometimes a number of pebbles are gathered up and put together; some red ochre or paint is put on, a Brahmin priest mutters an incantation



over it and it becomes a god. Often living men, animals and snakes are worshipped. We once visited a famous Hindu saint (?) in his temple and saw intelligent Brahmins come in and fall down at his feet and worship him. The people came from far and near to worship this so-called holy man.

One day in every year the Hindus worship the oxen that have drawn their plows and wagons for the remainder of the year. Three hundred and sixty-four days these poor animals are beaten, abused and often half starved; but on one day they are taken down to the river and bathed, their horns are painted red, garlands of flowers are put around their necks and the people fall down at their feet and worship them. Sometimes while worshipping living snakes women are bitten and they die.

Such are the gods of the poor Hindus of which some are well described in Psa. cxv. 3,7, "Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands.

They have mouths but they speak not; eyes have they but they see not; they have ears but they hear not; noses have they but they smell not; they have hands but they handle not; feet have they but they walk not; neither speak they through their throat."

In the villages of Berar, the god Maruti is the god mostly worshipped. This god is a stone carved in the shape of a monkey with its tail over its shoulder. He is supposed to be the keeper and protector of the lives and properties of the people and images of him are often put in the fields to protect the crops. No sacrifices are ever made to Maruti, but offerings of fruits, coconuts and food are given him. In order to show them the folly of worshipping such gods, and Maruti's utter inability to protect them in any way, we have said to them, "Who eats that rice you have just taken to Maruti, does he eat it?" No answer usually being forthcoming, we go on and say, "You know very well he can't eat it,

the first dog that comes along eats it and runs off. Now if Maruti cannot protect his own dinner, how can he protect you?" They at once laugh and say, "That's true, sir, that's true." And if we say, "Then why do you worship him?" They reply, "As our forefathers did, so we must do." Thus they go on in their terrible bondage to the custom of their ancestors, not being allowed to think for themselves, and when shown the folly of such worship are afraid to act upon their convictions. Shall we as Christians do nothing to liberate them from such hopeless bondage? Of course such awful idolatry debases and degrades the poor Hindus to the level of the things they worship. Their own proverb, "As is the god, so is the worshipper" is only too sadly true of the majority of India's people today. Yet their constancy, devotion and self-sacrifice in their worship of these dumb idols, should be an object lesson to all professing Christians. He worships be-

fore he eats and is much more willing to deny himself pleasure and comfort or to sacrifice time, strength and money, than the majority of Christians are for the one True and Living God.

The sad hopelessness of Hinduism and the degrading effects of idolatry are perhaps most of all seen in the condition of Hindu women. In all heathen countries women are despised and degraded and treated merely as the slave of man, but this is especially true of India. Only through Christ has woman anywhere been honored and uplifted and given her rightful position of loving helpmeet and companion of man. Christian sisters, as you ponder thoughtfully the following pages, with great praise in your hearts for the blessings that have come into your own lives through Christ, lift your hearts in prayer to God for your poor heathen sisters, who are in their present condition because they have not had a chance to know Christ.

Hindu women are especially the

slaves of the men and are sometimes treated worse than animals, for while Hinduism provides hospitals for cattle it provides none for its women. They are sometimes put out on the roads to die. We have seen women dying outside their own houses on the stones, with no one to care for them. Had she been a cow she would have been cared for, but she was only a woman. This is not because the hearts of Hindu men are especially hard, but because of the teachings of Hinduism. Manu, the great Hindu law-giver, teaches that woman is far inferior to man, and should be treated as a slave. The Hindu woman is taught to believe that she has no god but her husband, she must worship him.

Hindu mothers pray—so far as they know what prayer means—that their unborn children may be boys. The men want sons and will often curse their wives if the children are girls; this is partly because it will cost him a good deal of money to marry them off

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in a very few years. Hindu girl babies are thus unloved and unwelcome; but if they come, one of two things must happen. They must either be borne with and trained up with as good grace as possible or be put out of the way as soon as they are born. Before the British government had control of India, the latter was often the course taken. Hindu mothers would often take their little girl babies to the banks of the Ganges and throw them in that so-called holy river as food for the crocodiles. If a crocodile came to the surface, and catching the little thing in its huge jaws, crunched it until the red blood spurted out and crimsoned the water all around, then the poor mother would go away happy, thinking that "Mother Gunga" had accepted her offering. If no crocodile appeared and the little babe sank in the murky water, the poor, superstitious mother would go home sad at heart, thinking that she had made her offering in vain, it had



not been accepted. This is not done now, simply because it is not allowed by the government, although it is stated that many little girl babies are put away secretly still. Oh, that the mothers of Christian lands would pity these poor mothers of heathendom whom idolatry, ignorance, superstition and sin have so degraded that they lose their natural maternal love for their offspring.

Little girls are mostly married quite young, often at three or four years of age, and they go to live with their husbands at the age of twelve. This first ceremony is only called betrothal, but it is just as binding as marriage, for if the boy husband—or man as is sometimes the case—dies after this, the girl is a widow for the rest of her life, she must never marry again. The lot of the Hindu widow is one of the saddest that can be imagined, as she is treated as a being accursed of God and man. Henceforth she is treated with ignominy and contempt by all. All her jewels

—which the Hindu feminine heart loves so much—are broken off; she is not allowed to wear ornaments. They shave the heads of the high-caste widows, they must go shaven the rest of their lives, thus showing their disgrace to all. One of their garments is taken away and they must only eat one meal a day for the rest of their lives. They may become widows, as indeed, they frequently do, while still little girls, but this must continue till their old age and death. One day out of every ten or twelve they must fast from this one meal, not that their fast is supposed to benefit them spiritually in any way, but for the benefit of the family. As a Hindu woman has no god but her husband, the widow having lost her husband, has of course no god. On their fasting days these poor widows are not supposed to touch a drop of water even in India's burning heat. The very touch of a Hindu widow is supposed to be defiling, so that nobody will touch her and she must touch no

one. Thus is she, while living with the people, practically an outcast from society, having no joy or gladness in her life, and is mostly made the drudge of the house to do all the dirty work, and is the receptacle for foul epithet, opprobrium and abuse. Of course these things apply mostly to the higher castes as the hard-working people of the lower castes cannot observe these rules. We are glad also to state that there are few among the Brahmins, who are crying out against this awful injustice to widows, and are urging reform. The sad fact remains however, that there are about twenty-two millions of these widows in India, great numbers of whom are still children, who have before them only lives of misery, wretchedness and sorrow. Will not the women and girls of Christian lands, remembering what their lives have become through the Gospel, lift up their hearts constantly in prayer to God that the sad lot of these poor little widows of India may be brightened.

The condition of the Hindu wife is much better than that of the widow, but her life is not the life of companionship and heart-union of many Christian wives. The Hindu wife is in no sense the equal of her husband, she is his slave. They do not sit and talk together, she knows nothing to talk about as she is not taught to read and write, and he always seeks the companionship of men. They may not sit and eat together, that is altogether opposed to Hindu custom. She must wait upon him while he eats and after he has finished she can have what is left; but she must not be seen eating by her husband. When out on a journey the wife must not walk by her husband's side, but must walk behind him. If there be anything to carry she must carry it and the baby too. He does not usually carry anything unless there be too much for her to carry. The women are content with this because they know nothing better. It was their fate to be born women and

they suppose they are treated as women should be treated.

The Mahommedan women are very little better off than their Hindu sisters. She may be considered rather as the toy of her husband. A Mohammedan is allowed by the Koran to have four wives at a time and he may divorce them as often as he pleases, if they fail to please him. Just as a child tires of a toy and throws it aside and takes another, so a Mohammedan tires of one wife and wants another in her place.

The woman of India can never have the Gospel—which alone can lastingly benefit and brighten their lives—only as Christian women, called of God, shall go out and take it to them. Owing to Hindu customs, and laws governing Hindu society, it is impossible for men missionaries to preach the Gospel to the women. Here is a noble field for the consecrated effort, and sanctified intelligence of our Christian young women to be used for God. Will

you not dedicate your lives to Him for this purpose? Can there be anything more noble or anything more worthy of your highest aims and aspirations, than thus to be used of God to give the Gospel to these whose lives are so sad and whom the Gospel can make so glad? There are many noble examples of what the Gospel can do for India's women and some of these are standing in the forefront of the battle helping to lift their less fortunate sisters.

Hinduism holds its people firmly in the terrible, three-fold, vice-like grip of custom, creed and caste. To break through any one of these is thought to be a worse sin than adultery or murder, and, because of the social ostracism and persecution to be endured, requires more courage than a Hindu ordinarily has. Only very strong conviction by the Holy Spirit and His own courage and strength imparted can enable these poor people to break through and come really out for God. Much has been spoken and written of



Hindu customs, many of which are so bad in their effects; of caste and its terrible power; and of the bondage of the people to creed through the power of the priests, that perhaps the best way to cause their power to be understood is rather by illustration than explanation.

One of the most pernicious of Hindu customs, and one from which many evils spring, is that of child-marriage, already referred to. Although many of the people see the evil of this custom, very few have courage to stand for their convictions in the face of popular feeling, and to thus bring upon themselves the enmity of their relatives and caste-people. The reformers who sometimes speak out loudest in their meetings against this custom, and the injustice of child-widows in not allowing them to remarry, through fear often follow the popular custom when there is a little girl in their own families. The following illustration will show how bondage to such cus-

toms hinders the spread of the Gospel and the people from coming out for Christ:

“My dear wife and I, while touring among the towns and villages of North Berar, came one Monday to the town of Anjangaon. It was market-day and some ten thousand people from the town and surrounding villages were gathered together to buy and sell. We spent the afternoon and evening in the market selling books and tracts and preaching the Word. On the following morning we thought we would preach once in the town before going on farther. But as the town was a large one, having about eleven thousand inhabitants, and we had only time to preach once, we wondered where we should go to get the most people. We got upon our knees and asked God to direct us to that part of the town where the people would be most willing to hear us. We then walked out into the town and soon came to a place where two roads crossed and that

seeming a likely place we stepped back on one of the corners and a crowd soon gathered at the sound of our cornet. After we had sung a Gospel hymn I began to address them, when a man came hurriedly out of a house near by bringing in his hand a book neatly covered with paper which he handed to me. On opening it I found it to be a Marathi New Testament presented to the weavers of Anjangoan by Rev. M. B. Fuller. Mr. Fuller, when traveling through there on his way to a large religious fair, had stopped and preached to these silk weavers, of whom there are about three hundred families in this town, and had given them this New Testament. It had evidences of having been much used. As he handed it to me he said, "We want you to take that back and give us an Old Testament in its stead." We answered that we did not wish to take that from him, he could keep that and we would bring him an Old Testament also. A month or two later we went

up there again and presented them with an Old Testament. We had a very blessed time preaching among them, many of them apparently deeply interested in the word spoken. After the preaching quite a number of them bought Gospels. As we drove off down the street one of the men held up his book in the air and shouted after us, "From today I am going to worship the Living God."

We visited this town many times after this and on each subsequent occasion it seemed the work was spreading more and growing deeper. The leader of the weavers, who kept the books in his possession, would go around among the people with the New Testament, read to them, and tell them they should give up idolatry and begin to worship the True and Living God. On one occasion he knelt with me in the market place and prayed earnestly, "Oh God, for Jesus Christ's sake, pardon my many sins." The work spread from the weavers into two other castes

and over the river into another village, where some of the leading men got deeply interested. Even the Brahmin postmaster got stirred up and bought an English New Testament, as he could read English. Over twenty women knelt in prayer in their homes with one of our lady missionaries. It seemed as though the Holy Spirit were moving upon the whole neighborhood. Suddenly, however, the whole work came to a stop through this awful bondage to custom. The leader, who had so boldly prayed with us, was asked to come out boldly on Christ's side and confess Him publicly in baptism. This was the crucial test with him. He had a pretty little daughter about three years of age. He said he must get his little daughter married first and then he would be baptized. We tried to show him the wrong and foolishness of marrying such a little girl and that by marrying her to a Hindu he would forever hinder her from becoming a Christian. We told him

of our Christian marriage customs and urged him to let his little daughter grow up as Christians did. But all our reasoning seemed in vain. His replies were, "That is our custom, I must do it, if I do not marry her the people will make my name bad." As all the people were more or less looking to him, the whole work stopped right there because of that foolish custom. It went back from that point, so much so that some time afterwards some of our dear missionaries who went there were hooted out of the place. Thus the poor man was willing to lose his own soul rather than go against the feelings of his people, by not following the regular custom. Such is the awful bondage of the people to custom even when they see them to be wrong. Their saying, "As our forefathers did, so must we do" applies here also. Often the missionaries are disappointed at seeing some whom they think are so near the kingdom, just another step and they will be over



the line, then something like the above happens and all their work seems for the time to be undone.

Creed also, through the power of the Brahmin priests and astrologers, holds the people in perpetual bondage. The poor Hindus are more under the control of these priests than the Roman Catholics are under their priests through auricular confession. They are afraid to do anything without first consulting one of them. If a farmer wants to sow his field he must first consult the astrologer, who pretends to consult the stars and tells him what will be an auspicious day. If a man wants to start on a journey much the same ceremony is gone through. If a god is to be set up, a man will set up a stone, sculptured or otherwise, and put some red paint on it, but his creed teaches him that until the Brahmin priest has muttered over it the incantations that are supposed to transform it into a god, it is only a stone. When a child is to be born he is called in to

tell whether it is to be a boy or a girl. Of course he oftener guesses wrong than right but he ingeniously explains the reason of a child being born other than he predicts and the easily deceived people forget his many mistakes and praise him when he guesses right. After a child is born he is called in to tell the child's horoscope; and when it is married he performs the marriage ceremonies. When a person dies he is at the head of the funeral ceremonies muttering his holy (?) incantations. For each of these many ceremonies he receives a good fee and thus grows rich at the expense of the poor. Even after persons are dead he does not let them alone, he must perform the annual *schraddh* ceremonies in memory of the dead, and so goes on annually getting money out of the sons for their dead fathers. Everything in Hinduism is made to profit the Brahmins at the expense of the lower castes. In this connection the people have a saying which is very sug-

gestive, "Potoba mag Vithoba." "First the worship of the stomach, then the worship of the god." For this reason the Brahmin priests like to keep the lower castes in ignorance, because were they educated they could not exercise such authority over them. For this reason also they strenuously oppose the work of the missionaries, and any desire in the people to become Christians, as the people would immediately get out from under their power and they would lose their fees.

Terrible as is the power of custom and creed, caste controls the people with a more tyrannical despotism than all and makes much more effective the other evils. It yields to nothing and nobody. It hinders all progress in all directions, social or religious, and is largely the cause of much of the poverty and backwardness of India today, and rests as a baneful curse upon land and people. It is just the opposite of the Christian doctrines of "the Fatherhood of God" and the "Brotherhood

of Man." Its devotees are taught that to break caste is a worse sin than adultery or murder. It takes away all freedom of thought and liberty of conscience. A Hindu must not think for himself, he must act in accordance with what is thought right or wrong by his caste-fellows, and what they think is best for him. He must not eat or drink anything prepared by a person of lower caste than himself. Though he be ever so thirsty he must not drink water from any vessel owned by or even touched by a person of another caste; nor must he drink water from a well owned by a person of another caste. He must not touch a low-caste person, nor a low-caste person touch him, as that is considered to be defiling. Who but the poor Hindus would submit to such unreasonable curtailment of individual liberty? How foolish this all appears in the light of God's word, where it says, "There is nothing from without a man that entering into him can defile him: but the

things which come out of him, those are they which defile the man." Mark vii. 15. "For from within, out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders \* \* All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Mark vii. 21, 23.

During the recent famine in India the terrible power of caste was very strikingly illustrated. Many whose lives might have been saved, starved to death rather than touch food prepared by other than their own caste people. One dear missionary going along a street one day, saw a poor man lying by the roadside, slowly dying of starvation. He said, "My poor man, I will go and get you something to eat." He went to his home and had some rice prepared in just the way the Hindus like it, each grain white, dry and separate. He put it in front of the starving man and bade him eat. The man, shaking his head, replied, "I cannot eat it." The missionary told him he would soon die unless he ate some

food. He answered, "Well, what is the use of life, if I break my caste?" He lay hungrily looking at the food within his reach that would have saved his life; but because of caste he dare not touch it. Thus he died with food before him, which but for caste he could have eaten and lived. Such is the awful power of caste and such is the terrible grip with which Hinduism holds its people in such merciless bondage.

In thus condemning caste we cannot but admire the faithfulness of the people to its principles and long that Christians may constantly live as faithful to the truth as it is in Jesus. Oh let us speedily give these poor slaves of ignorance, superstition, sin and false teaching the blessed Gospel of liberty and freedom through Christ.

The persecution that often follows open confession of Christ deters many from becoming Christians. If a man begins to show much interest in the missionary or his message he often be-

comes a marked man and unless he denies his interest in us he will be hindered from coming in contact with the missionary, sometimes being sent to a place many miles from where there is a missionary. If he has expressed a desire to become a Christian, by threats on one hand and promises on another, he is made to give up his desire, and sometimes such a one becomes a bitter opponent. Notwithstanding the many ways of persecution to which they become liable, there are many who come out boldly in the face of it all and who have become brave witnesses to the power of the Gospel. These have shown themselves willing to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and willing to suffer for His Name's sake.

There are remarkable instances of God's gracious interposition on behalf of His persecuted children. Some time since, a Brahmin lawyer of Western India, a very intelligent and highly educated man, who had for some time

studied the Bible, and had become convinced that it was God's Word and that Jesus is the only Saviour, decided to become a Christian. He came boldly out for Christ and was baptized. Immediately after his baptism his wife and children were taken from him, they were not allowed to live with him any more. Were they not Brahmins, while he had become a Christian, whose very touch would defile them? Then his caste-people tried to take his life in various ways, but each time God interposed on his behalf. It is a custom in India for friends to send sweetmeats and cookies to each other on festival occasions just as in Christian lands, at Christmas and Easter cards and presents are sent. On one such occasion a dish of sweetmeats was sent him by some friends in the usual way. As he was busy he set them aside without touching them and went on with his work. He was kept from touching it all that day. The next morning when he came in from his morning's walk he



was surprised to find a number of rats dead on the floor. He could not at first imagine what had killed them. Some time after he thought he would try some of the confectionery that had been sent him and then he saw that the rats had been at it and that was what had killed them. God had thus kept His child from touching it until the rats had shown him that it was poisoned. On another occasion as he was about to start out on his usual morning's walk, a voice seemed to say to him, "Don't go." He was inclined to disregard it at first, thinking it was just due to morbid feeling. But after the voice had come three times he thought there must be something in it, so turned and went indoors. Some time afterwards on going into town on business he met some men carrying a man to the hospital, with his head all broken and bleeding. On inquiry he found out that on the road which he would have taken had he disregarded the voice, some men had been in hiding

behind a thicket waiting to jump out on him when he came along and kill him. They had mistaken the other man for him and had fallen upon him, leaving him for dead on the road. In this way the dear Lord had again wonderfully preserved the life of His child from the bitterness and malignity of his persecutors.

Many of the high-caste people who become Christians have to face some such persecution as this; but the low-castes and the out-castes are also persecuted. A large number of low-caste people in the province of Gujerat recently became Christians. Their caste-people and others at once began to injure them in various ways. Their houses were set on fire and their crops burned down in their fields, sometimes they would be met singly on the roads and beaten. Often some of these poor men have come running into the missionary's house with their heads cut and bleeding. In spite of these cruel persecutions however, they stand true

to God. Such a condition of things should make every Christian heart cry out, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly." Hinduism, that awful system of idolatry, superstition and sin, can never be effectually broken up until Jesus comes. India's wrongs, and the wrongs of the poor little child-widows, which cry unto God, can never be righted until the Prince of Peace comes, who shall reign in righteousness and under whose benign rule the cruel power of caste shall be broken; and the oppression, tyranny and robbery of a rapacious Hindu priesthood forever done away.

The great mistake is often made by many dear Christian people that India is now pretty well evangelized, that as missionaries have been going there ever since Carey went in 1792, there must be about a sufficient number there now. But this is very far from being true, there being yet many thousands of towns and villages in India in which the Gospel has never been

preached. There are some provinces almost entirely without the Gospel, and many districts and some tribes entirely so. The province of Behar, in which the poppy is cultivated for the manufacture of opium, contains a population of twenty-four million souls, with only six missionaries, or one missionary to every four millions. The North West provinces have one missionary to every six hundred and sixty thousand; the Bengal Presidency one to every four hundred and two thousand; the Punjab has one missionary to every four hundred and eighty thousand. Taking the average of India as a whole, including the large cities such as Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, in each of which there are large numbers of missionaries, there is only one missionary to every two hundred and eighty thousand people. There are many hill tribes in India among whom there is no witness for Jesus, and in many parts of India one can travel a hundred miles without finding a mission-

ary. There is plenty of room in India yet for missionaries to go fired with Paul's holy ambition to "preach the Gospel, not where Christ was already named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."

It is only the Gospel that can bring liberty to India's millions in bondage, only through Christ can they obtain satisfaction for their hungry hearts. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." How shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent?" God specially lays upon His people the responsibility to give the heathen the Gospel but we are so slow to respond to His call. He has especially laid India at the door of His Church, with peculiar and special opportunities for the rapid spread of the Gospel. No other heathen land is so fully open as

India, with a government giving protection to the lives and properties of the missionaries in every part. Between most of the larger towns good government roads have been built, and in many parts there are railways. In every part of the Empire missionaries have liberty to preach the Gospel. The terrible calamities that have befallen India have done much to open the way for the Gospel by softening the hearts of the people and by showing the utter inability of their idols to help them. "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." Isa. xxvi. 9. In no country have God's judgments, war, pestilence, earthquake, plague and famine been abroad as in India, and they have opened the hearts of the people as never before to listen to the Word and to confess that these judgments have come upon them on account of their sins. Shall we not meet God in this time of opportunity and pray "the Lord of the harvest that He

thrust forth laborers into His harvest-field." "Say not ye there are yet four months and then cometh harvest." "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields for they are white already to harvest." Let us keep this great Empire, with its teeming millions, constantly before the Lord, until every part of it has the Gospel. And let all truly Christian hearts help to answer their own prayers by self-denying giving and by going as God opens the way. Difficulties there are in the way of new missionaries but none so great that in the strength of Christ they may not be overcome.

The language is perhaps one of the chief difficulties to meet the newly arrived missionary. There are altogether about one hundred and fifty languages and dialects in India, many of them entirely different from each other in character and construction. But as most of the main languages are spoken by millions of people it is seldom necessary to learn more than one,

Hindu is spoken by about sixty millions and Marathi by about forty millions, and the other chief languages by correspondingly large numbers. These languages are very much more difficult to learn than the European languages, having a much more difficult grammar and a fuller verb. This need not stumble any, however, as we know many missionaries who had had few advantages of education and some who had never studied English grammar, whom God enabled to get those difficult tongues well and to preach the Gospel in them.

Another difficulty in the way is the climate with its great heat and deadly diseases. But the dear Lord has again and again proven Himself equal to deliver His children in every emergency, and to fully supply their every need. If there at His bidding, for His glory, and living in obedience to His will, the life of the missionary is just as safe in India as in America. Adaptability to the climate, to new and strange sur-



roundings, to the manners and customs of the people, and the many things that come into a missionary's life, is easily acquired by the missionary really sent out of God.

O may God lay the need of India's dying millions—dying at the rate of ten millions a year—upon the hearts of His people in these Christian lands, so that we may renew our consecration and efforts to give them the light and liberty of the Gospel.





